

CIA's Job

CIA

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Kirkpatrick, Lyman

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THE REAL CIA, by Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr. 312 pp New York: Macmillan. \$8.95.

Intelligence organizations do not write about themselves, which is a pity, because practically everybody else does. The exposed tenth of the iceberg is swarming with psychedelic novelists, journalists reputable and journalists otherwise, defectors of every stripe, writers under the impression that a stint in wartime "intelligence" a generation ago constitutes current qualification, terminated agents, paper mills and all manner of self-appointed experts, each one scrabbling for a foothold and all attempting with varying degrees of self-confidence to extrapolate the size and shape of the mass in the murky depths.

Now comes Lyman Kirkpatrick, whose intelligence career dates from 1942 and covers service with both of the CIA's predecessors, the wartime OSS and the post-war Central Intelligence Group. He was present at the birth of CIA and held a continual series of high posts, including Inspector General and Comptroller, until finally retiring from the position of Executive Director in 1965 to become a professor of political science at Brown University. No one with such qualifications has written at length about CIA before; even Allen Dulles devoted himself primarily to the craft of intelligence and avoided any discussion of the major American organization practising that craft.

Mr. Kirkpatrick also avoids any extended description of the CIA. This is no expose; it covers no material that is not public property, and in that sense the title is decidedly misleading. (I am certain it was chosen by the publishers and not by the author).

The book is a straightforward autobiography of a man who spent 23 years in the intelligence profession and held high office in the CIA for the first 18 years of its existence. Barring the U-2 incident and the Bay of Pigs operation, (of which an especially objective and when necessary self-critical account is given), hardly a "case" is mentioned, and the word "agent" is conspicuous by its absence. It is usually replaced by the word "source," for the major function of the CIA, which Mr. Kirkpatrick is describing, is to collect raw information and then to evaluate it and turn it into finished national intelligence which can be disseminated to the elements of the Federal government, starting with the President, whose decisions and actions depend on it. And the process starts with a source.

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What emerges is virtually the first dispassionate, knowing appraisal of the CIA's role in our national government. It makes clear why the CIA was created, how it became what it is today, what it can do and, even more important, what it cannot do and should not be called on to do. It states quite frankly the dangers inherent in the existence of such an organization, and at the same time clearly and

convincingly describes the checks on such dangers. It should (but no doubt will not) once and for all scotch the bugaboo that the CIA is some sort of "invisible government," a law unto itself that generates and carries out policies contrary to the will of the American people and its openly elected leaders. The material on budgetary and congressional inspections and controls alone should be required reading for every journalist and congressman in the land, starting with columnists and political cartoonists. In short, the book sweeps away a tremendous amount of what the Soviets (who engage in massive efforts to peddle it) aptly call "disinformation."

Above all, Mr. Kirkpatrick makes it clear that the CIA is a fully controlled organ of the executive branch of our government, directly responsible to the President. He points out that the often spectacularly adverse publicity that a failure can generate has usually stemmed from cases where policy-makers have "seized on the CIA's apparatus for covert action as a method to solve some of the problems that they cannot solve by diplomacy or direct military action." Fair enough, and it can stand as a just epitaph for the Bay of Pigs.

This is an important book, and it should be widely read.

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